

CLAIMS

1. A method for causing at least a first electronic messaging service mailbox (BOX1) of at least a first electronic messaging service system (S1) connected to at least a first user station (US1) for a user of said first mailbox (BOX1) to migrate towards a second electronic messaging service system (S2), the first electronic messaging service mailbox (BOX1) having a first physical electronic address (ADP1) and at least one first access electronic address (AD1) for giving access to users from the outside;

said method being characterized in that each of the first and second messaging service systems (S1, S2) is connected to a message routing center (FED) including a directory database (DIR) containing the addresses associated with the mailboxes of the messaging service systems (S1, S2); and

during a first step (E1) a migration request (MR) is recorded on a migration control server (MCS), which request contains, in association, at least the first access address (AD1) of the first mailbox (BOX1) and a scheduled migration instant (DM) for migration of the first mailbox (BOX1);

then, for each migration request (MR) recorded in the migration control server (MCS), and in succession,

during a second step (E2), a second electronic messaging service mailbox (BOX2) having a second physical address (ADP2) is created in the second electronic messaging service system (S2); and

when prescribed conditions (E3, E20, E21, E22, E23) including the arrival (E3) of the scheduled migration instant (DM) have been verified as being satisfied, a third step (E4) is executed in the second
5 electronic messaging service system (S2), during which the first access address (AD1) of the first mailbox (BOX1) is formed as the electronic access address for users from the outside for the second mailbox (BOX2);

when conditions required on the first and second
10 mailboxes (BOX1, BOX2) have been verified (E5, E6, E7, E8) by the message routing center (FED) as being satisfied,

during a fourth step (E8), in the message routing center (FED), and for the first mailbox (BOX1) a queue
15 is activated for any incoming messages that are addressed to the first access address (AD1) so that they do not arrive in the first mailbox (BOX1); and

during a fifth step (E9), in the directory database (DIR), the physical electronic address (ADP1)
20 recorded for the first mailbox (BOX1) is changed into the physical electronic address (ADP2) of the second mailbox (BOX2), the queue is deactivated, and the messages held up in the queue for the first mailbox (BOX1) are transferred to the second mailbox (BOX2).

25 2. A migration method according to claim 1, characterized in that the second electronic messaging service system (S2) has at least one third electronic messaging service mailbox (BOX3) and is connected to at least one third user station (US3) of said third
30 mailbox (BOX3), and the second electronic messaging

service mailbox (BOX2) created during the second step (E2) further has the first access address (AD1) as its access address (AD1) for access from the third user station (US3) of the second electronic messaging service system (S2), and, during the second step (E2), in the second electronic messaging service system (S2), redirection is established for redirecting the second mailbox (BOX2) towards the first mailbox (BOX1) so as to redirect any message arriving at the second mailbox (BOX2) towards the first mailbox (BOX1), said redirection being cancelled during the third step (E4).

3. A migration method according to any preceding claim, said method being characterized in that:

the directory database (DIR) records the addresses associated with the mailboxes of the messaging service systems (S1, S2) including their aliases;

during the third step (E4), the directory database (DIR) communicates the contact formed by the addresses and aliases associated with the first access address (AD1) to the second electronic messaging service system (S2), which records it in a table (TC) of contacts provided in said second system, the addresses and/or aliases associated in said table (TC) of contacts with the contact having the first access address (AD1) are formed as additional access electronic address for users from the outside for the second mailbox (BOX2), then said contact is deleted from the table (TC).

4. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that a plurality of first electronic messaging service systems (S1, S3) connected to at least one mailbox user station are provided.

5 5. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the message routing center (FED) is suitable for routing the messages transmitted from the outside and addressed to a mailbox (BOX1, BOX2, BOX3) of any one of the messaging service systems (S1, S2) to said system, and is suitable for routing
10 messages transmitted from a mailbox (BOX1, BOX2, BOX3) of any one of the messaging service systems (S2, S1) and addressed to a mailbox (BOX1, BOX2, BOX3) of any other one of the messaging service systems (S2, S1) to
15 said other system.

6. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that:

between the third step (E4) and the fourth step (E8), the messaging service systems (S1, S2) communicate (E6) to the message routing center (FED) an address up synchronization request, containing the addresses associated with their mailboxes (BOX1, BOX2);

20 the second messaging service system (S2) communicates (E7) to the message routing center (FED) a list of the access addresses (AD1) of the second mailbox (BOX2); and
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the conditions required during the fourth step (E8) comprise verification by the message routing center (FED) that the up synchronization request
30 received contains the access addresses of the list

received from the second messaging service system (S2) for the first and second mailboxes (BOX1, BOX2).

7. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the prescribed conditions
5 (E3, E20, E21, E22, E23) for executing the third step (E4) comprise verifications (E20, E21, E22, E23) performed on the user station (US1) of the first mailbox (BOX1).

8. A migration method according to claim 7,
10 characterized in that verifications performed on the user station of the first mailbox (BOX1) are performed for a second time (E22) a certain lapse of time after the first time (E20) that they are performed, and when said verifications (E20, E22) are positive, said user
15 station (US1) communicates (E23) to the migration control server (MCS) information on the type and the memory size of the first mailbox (BOX1).

9. A migration method according to claim 7 or claim 8, characterized in that prior to processing the
20 migration requests, a choice is made between an operating mode with said verifications (E20, E21, E22, E23) for executing the third step (E4) and an operating mode without said verifications (E20, E21, E22, E23) for executing the third step (E4).

25 10. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the second messaging service system (S2) is connected to at least one data migration server (DMS) and, after the fifth step (E9) executed for the first mailbox (BOX1), a data transfer
30 step (E15, E17) is executed, during which the data

migration server (DMS) triggers (E15, E17) transfer of the data present in the first mailbox (BOX1) of the first messaging service system (S1) to the second mailbox (BOX2) of the second messaging service system (S2).

11. A migration method according to claim 10, characterized in that the migration control server (MCS) records in its database (MDB) an address migration identifier identifying address migration performed for the first mailbox (BOX1) for which the fifth step (E9) has been performed, the data transfer step (E15, E17) being performed by the data migration server (DMS) for the first mailboxes (BOX1) associated with an address migration identifier identifying address migration performed in the database (MDB) of the migration control server (MCS).

12. A migration method according to claim 10 or claim 11, characterized in that, when the fifth step (E9) has not been performed for the first mailbox (BOX1) and if said mailbox has diary data, the data migration server (DMS) triggers transfer (E17) of the diary data of said first mailbox (BOX1) of the first messaging service system (S1) to the second mailbox (BOX2) of the second messaging service system (S2).

13. A migration method according to any one of claims 10 to 12, characterized in that, after the data transfer step (E15, E17), the data migration server (DMS) interrogates (E18) the migration control server (MCS) to determine whether another mailbox exists for which the fifth step (E9) has been executed and, in the

affirmative, the data migration server (DMS) executes the data transfer step (E15, E17) for the mailbox that is indicated to it by the migration control server (MCS) and for which the fifth step (E9) has been
5 executed.

14. A migration method according to any one of claims 10 to 13, characterized in that, prior to processing the migration requests, a choice is made between an operating mode with a data transfer step
10 (E15, E17) and an operating mode without a data transfer step (E15, E17).

15. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the second messaging service system (S2) is connected to at least one data
15 migration server (DMS) and, after the fifth step (E4) executed for the first mailbox (BOX1), a local data transfer step (E30) is executed for transferring local data from the user station (US1), during which step the user station (US1) of the first mailbox (BOX1) of the
20 first messaging service system (S1) triggers transfer of the data present in said user station (US1) to the second mailbox (BOX2) of the second messaging service system (S2).

16. A migration method according to claim 15,
25 characterized in that, for the user station (US1) for which the local data transfer step (E30) has been executed, its parameterization is changed by default into a prescribed parameterization compatible with the second messaging service system (S2).

17. A migration method according to claim 15 or claim 16, characterized in that, prior to processing the migration requests, a choice is made between an operating mode with a local data transfer step (E30) during which local data is transferred from user stations, and an operating mode without a data transfer step (E30) from user stations.

18. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that, for recording the migration request (MR) during the first step (E1), the migration request is entered on an administration station (AS) connected to the migration control server (MCS), the entered migration request (MR) is sent from the administration station (AS) to the migration control server (MCS), and the migration request (MR) is recorded in a database (TC) of the migration control server (MCS).

19. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the first electronic messaging service system (S1) includes at least one fourth electronic messaging service mailbox (BOX4) and is connected to at least one fourth user station (US4) of said fourth mailbox (BOX4), and, during the fifth step (E9), in the first electronic messaging service system (S1), a redirection is established for redirecting the first mailbox (BOX1) towards the second mailbox (BOX2), so as to redirect any message arriving at the first mailbox (BOX1) towards the second mailbox (BOX2).

20. A migration method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that the first mailbox (BOX1) for which at least the fifth step (E9) has been executed is deleted (E41) from the first messaging service system (S1).

21. Apparatus for implementing the migration method according to any preceding claim, said apparatus being characterized in that it comprises:

a message routing center (FED) serving to be connected to the first and second messaging service systems (S1, S2) and including a directory database (DIR) containing the addresses associated with the mailboxes of the first and second messaging service systems (S1, S2);

a migration control server (MCS) connected to the message routing center (FED) and suitable for recording at least one migration request (MR) containing, in association, at least the first access address (AD1) of a first mailbox (BOX1) of the first messaging service system (S1) and a scheduled migration instant (DM) for migration of the first mailbox (BOX1), the migration control server (MCS) including means for controlling processing of each migration request (MR) recorded according to the second to fifth steps; and

a data migration server (DMS) serving to be connected to the messaging service systems (S1, S2, S3), the migration control server (MCS) being connected to the data migration server (DMS), and including control means for controlling said server, which means are suitable for causing it to execute a step for

transferring data from the first mailbox (BOX1) to the second mailbox (BOX2) for the migration request (MR) processed in the fifth step (E9).